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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [EUN](#) [NATO](#) [PO](#) [KV](#) [SR](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGAL: SPECIAL ENVOY ON KOSOVO DISCUSSES GOP
EFFORTS TO BUILD EU CONSENSUS

REF: BRUSSELS 02687

Classified By: Pol/Econ Officer Tiffany McGriff for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

SUMMARY

11. (C) Antonio Tanger Correa, Portugal's Special Envoy to the Western Balkans, discussed the GOP's efforts to build EU consensus on Kosovo and the impact that the situation could have on internal EU and transatlantic relations. He stressed that the GOP is doing everything within its powers to find a realistic solution by the December 10 deadline, but acknowledged that there is a slim chance the Slovenian Presidency may inherit the issue. The GOP MFA, which offered to have Tanger Correa brief the Charge, obviously intended the meeting to demonstrate its energetic commitment to achieving EU consensus on moving forward in Kosovo. END SUMMARY

PORTUGAL'S INSIDE MAN

12. (C) On August 27, Charge met with Portugal's Special Envoy to the Western Balkans Ambassador Antonio Tanger Correa who had just returned to Lisbon for consultations from a fact-finding mission in the Balkans. The two discussed the GOP's consensus-building efforts and the future of Kosovo. While not an official member of the Contact Group, Tanger Correa acts as the GOP's inside man on Kosovo, meeting with officials in the region and reporting to Lisbon. His role is vital to helping the GOP craft its approach to the Kosovo issue.

13. (C) Tanger Correa, a seasoned diplomat familiar with the key issues and players in the Balkans (he is a former ambassador to Belgrade) and a confidant of Foreign Minister Luis Amado, painted a picture of tireless GOP engagement in building EU consensus, in finding a solution to Kosovo by December 10, and in developing a common game plan for what to do if and when Kosovo decides, against advice, to declare unilateral independence. He said that part of Portugal's message to its fellow member states is that "We need to solve this problem now, because Kosovo is not worth damaging the EU, and Kosovo is not worth damaging transatlantic relations."

14. (C) The meeting was arranged by the MFA's Director of European Affairs Lilitiana Araujo, who during an August 23 debrief on FM Amado's recent trip to Serbia and Kosovo, suggested that the Charge meet Tanger Correa to gain deeper insight into the GOP's consensus-building efforts in the region.

CONSENSUS BUILDING IS A DIFFICULT ROAD TO NAVIGATE

¶15. (C) While acknowledging that some states will need more convincing than others, Tanger Correa stated that the Portuguese believe the process is moving forward but cannot guarantee that a consensus will be reached by December 10.

¶16. (C) Tanger Correa described consensus building as "a difficult road to navigate" complicated by "political influences" and the varying positions of 27 EU member states. He also affirmed that "Portugal is doing everything that it can within this time period, but that there's a slim chance that we will not achieve consensus."

SOLVING THE PROBLEM VS MANAGING THE PROBLEM

¶17. (C) Tanger Correa said that there were two main obstacles to achieving EU consensus on Kosovo and beginning to "solve the problem rather than manage the problem." The first is the "legal issue." The EU needs to agree on steps to take in the event of a unilateral declaration of independence -- and more specifically, whether UNSCR 1244 in fact permits independence for Kosovo and continued EU involvement on the ground after such a declaration. He said that a team of experts would meet beginning August 30 to begin to hash that out. More important, however, was to resolve the "political issues." Portugal's constant refrain to its partners was that the EU had to get serious about finding the political will to develop a consensus approach and stick to it.

SERBIA'S BRIGHT IDEA...VIRTUAL INDEPENDENCE

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¶18. (C) Tanger Correa noted that Belgrade shared with the GOP a solution that it planned to present. This idea, known as the 10-Year Plan, envisions a confederation-like agreement -- somewhat similar to the Montenegro example -- that would grant Kosovo certain privileges like a separate army and virtual independence over a ten-year time frame. Tanger Correa said he did not know if Serbia planned to make public its plan, but stated that the GOS wanted to present it face-to-face to the Kosovars. Tanger Correa, though not surprised by Belgrade's plan, was dismissive of the proposal because he thought the Kosovars would never accept it.

COMMENT

¶10. (C) Tanger Correa, an affable, confident soul, presented himself as Portugal's energetic problem-solver and inside man on Kosovo. It was obvious that he was aware of our concerns over his role. His comments were peppered with name-dropping about American diplomats he had worked with over the years, perhaps in an effort to clarify his bona fides. It is clear that he is highly committed to solving the Kosovo issue, yet less clear if his commitment and motivation will make a difference. His message, however, was a simple straightforward one, and one that he knew we wanted to hear: The GOP, under FM Amado's strong leadership, is sparing no effort to push the EU for consensus and is not stalling in the hope of passing the Kosovo hot potato to Slovenia.
Ballard